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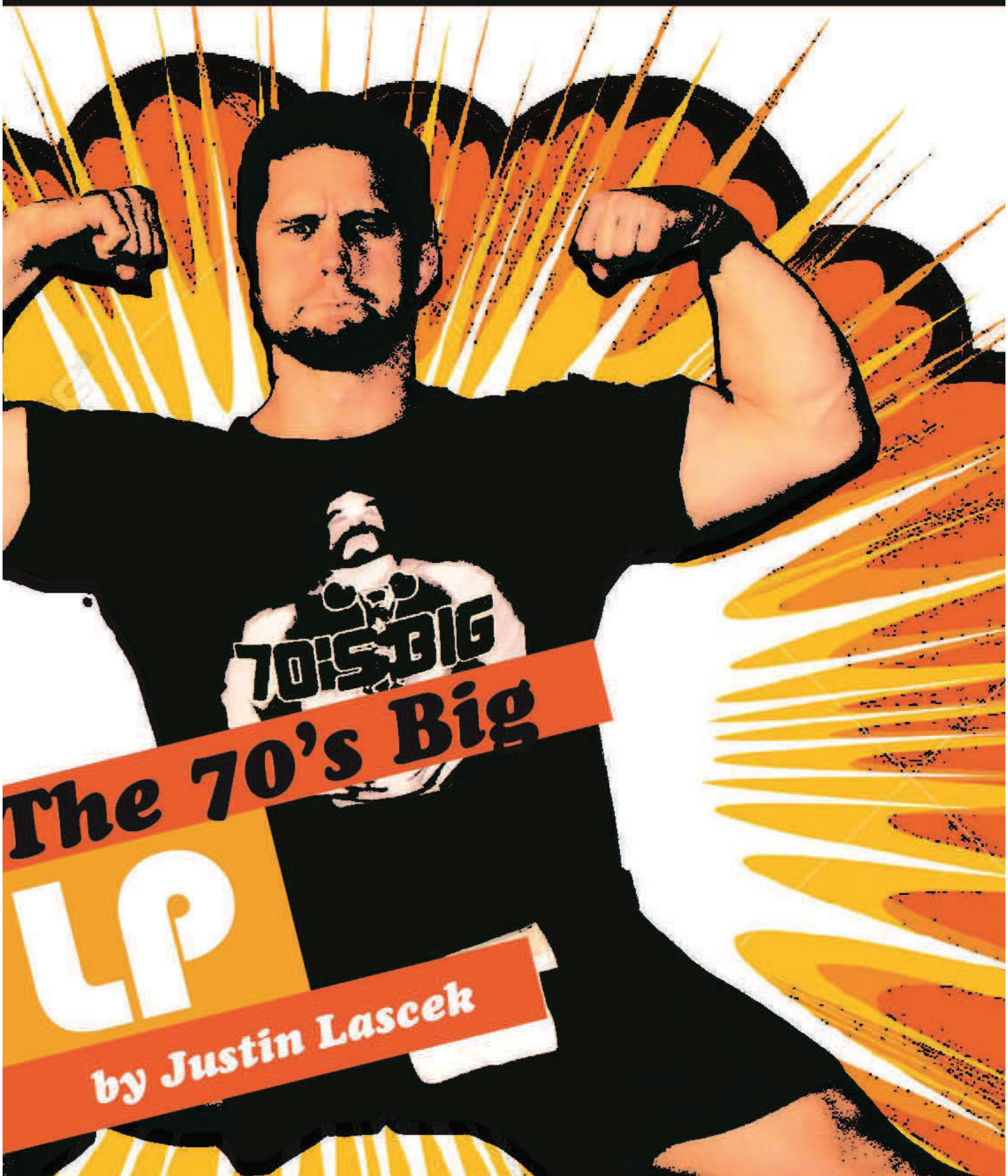

The 70's Big LP

by Justin Lascek

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Forward

My name is Shawn Owen. Fortunately for you, Justin asked me to write this forward. As you may be aware, this isn't his first book. It won't likely be his last either (unless he dies). Justin's work makes me think of only one thing to tell people.

I was eighteen years old and it was Halloween eve of my freshman year at college. For reasons wholly irrelevant to this book, my then girlfriend and I decided to wear each other's clothes as our official and regrettable costumes of the evening – hilarity did not ensue. Shockingly, we easily fit into each other's clothes. She became upset upon realizing she had put on enough pounds to fit into guy's jeans. I became even more upset upon realizing that I was scrawny enough to fit into the jeans of a girl who was shorter and definitely weighed less than me. I realized immediately that I was skinny and bordering on skinny-fat. Unacceptable. I decided I had to be bigger and better.

I started working out at my apartment complex gym. By the end of the year I had accomplished nothing. I weighed in right at 156 lbs at 6'2". That summer, I told Justin I wanted to start working out. I had never really played sports or trained. He invited me to start coming with him to the gym every day. We worked out Monday through Friday for about a year. I would do whatever program he was trying out or tinkering with that day, week or month.

Eventually, I began to notice that I felt and looked totally different. By the end of the year, I weighed more than 190 lbs. I recall the occasion when I first noticed my triceps in the mirror in between sets and commented: "Man, I think this weight lifting is actually working." I recall his response was to simply look at me and state: "Well I fucking hope so, that's the whole idea, Todd!"

I continued working out on my own – getting advice from Justin along the way. Currently, I'm 28 years old and weigh a handsome 225 lbs. or so. I'm a bigger and more muscular version of my former self. That's not simply because I was athletic or had great genetics – neither could be further from the truth. It's because Justin encouraged me to get my shit together and helped push me down the path by showing me how to change my body, get stronger, look better, and feel better about myself.

There's always room for improvement. If you want to change your body for the better, you will be well-served by this book. Isn't that the whole idea, Todd?

S.O.

Introduction

When I first started planning this book in 2011, I figured it would be an arm training book. I was messing around with my programming to get stronger with bigger arms. There are plenty of bodybuilding programs, but not many strength programs that hit the arms. As I've worked on this book, I've realized it's more than just an arm training program. Here are the different ways to use this program:

- **Linear Strength Progression** – This is another option for novices to get stronger and bigger. The inclusion of things like rows, chin-ups, and curls will prevent the "big legs, small arms" body so many guys get from only squatting.

- **Transition from Bodybuilding to Strength Training** – This program is a good transition from bodybuilding because it includes a bit of vanity training, but not at the expense of strength training. Bodybuilding guys can even use this as a mass gaining program; the decrease in training frequency and overall volume combined with hard eating cannot be denied.

- **Transition to Intermediate Programming** – Each exercise in this program has several set/rep schemes to keep you progressing for a long time. Some of them breach into the realm of intermediate programming. There's a gray area between novice and intermediate programming, and *The 70's Big LP* connects the two.

That's all fine and dandy, but I know the real reason you're here.

Bigger. Fucking. Arms.

I understand. You want to fill out your sleeves and let that cephalic vein *pop* on the head of your biceps. You want your girlfriend (boyfriend?) to be surprised at your prowess as you walk arm-in-arm. You want her to cup her hands on each side of those rippling appendages and say those magical words, "They're so big…and muscly." You want to hit a respectable front-double-bi pose – MAKING AN AUDIBLE, "SSSSSK!" NOISE – anytime, anywhere, and have people think, "Hey…that's pretty good." Yes, yes, we have an understanding of each other.

Somehow in the evolution of CrossFit and the "be strong for the sake of strength" movement, arm training was shunned and spit on. They said arms didn't matter – they were wrong. They made a mockery out of your arm training. It doesn't matter who "they" are, because they are either fat or irrelevant. This book is all about you getting stronger, getting bigger. Because if you're going to spend 10+ hours in the gym a week, then why not fucking look like it?

Here's the good news: you don't have to completely trash your strength program to get bigger arms. You don't have to shave your chest and do 30 sets twice a week. You don't have to do steroids. You just need to include some big, compound movements to balance out your musculature, keep getting

stronger, and maybe throw in some arm specific work. Because it wouldn't be an arm training program without it. So let's get started.

--Justin Lascek, 2015

Chapter 1 – Important Concepts

There are some important concepts you must understand in order to improve your muscular development. In this chapter you will learn about stress and adaptation, the importance of systemic training, how to effectively work muscles, why large compound movements are ideal, and basic information about a linear strength progression.

Stress – Recovery – Adaptation

All biological beings intend to maintain homeostasis given their current environment. When something changes homeostasis – i.e. a stress is imparted – then the being will work to return to homeostasis in a way so that it's prepared for that event in the future. Put simply, a stress is applied that triggers a recovery phase to result in an adaptation.

"Stress" can be the presence or lack of something. For example, if your skin does not receive sunlight during the winter, it will become pale. This is an example of a lack of stress. "Recovery" is a simplified way of referring to the physiological processes that occur in order to produce a given adaptation. In the "no sunlight" example, the recovery phase is physiological process to result in lighter skin. The lighter skin itself is the adaptation.

Exercise can introduce a variety of stressors and subsequent adaptations to the human body. Yet, we aren't here to simply exercise; we are training for a goal. By understanding the Stress/Recovery/Adaptation process, we can make exercise into a purposeful stress to get the desired adaptation.

Keep in mind that given our current state of adaptation, there is an arbitrary amount of stress that will yield the result. In the case of strength training, we aim to have the lowest dose of stress and still acquire the desired response. If "x" was the necessary dose of stress, and we imparted 3x or even x^2, we would be applying more stress than is necessary. Applying the right dose of stress means more efficient recovery and better progress. For us non-drugged mortals, we must understand that getting bigger isn't just dependent on lifting weights, but recovering from lifting weights.

Systemic Training

Guys in regular globo gyms have sub-par results because they are a) not strong and b) not taking advantage of systemic training. The hormonal response to training will dictate the recovery and adaptation. Big compound movements work more muscle causing more stress, thus a high hormonal response. Isolation exercises only work the targeted muscles and result in a much lower hormonal stress. The more musculature worked, the greater the systemic response and adaptation. That's why you're still going to squat or deadlift on every training day.

You're Not a Bodybuilder

Avoid researching successful bodybuilders' routines in your quest for jackedness and bigger arms. While they can provide ideas or direction, emulating their program is typically futile. Bodybuilders are typically highly experienced steroid-using behemoths. Their program is not suitable for you in the same sense that Konstantinovs' deadlift program is not (he's a Latvian powerlifting who can deadlift 939 lbs raw). Bodybuilders use many sets and reps while strength training only needs a few.

Ignore the fact that bodybuilders do a lot of partial reps in their videos. They are very strong, highly muscular individuals who are using too much weight to complete a full rep on purpose to provide an adaptive stress to their muscles. Their musculature is already developed, but in order to fully develop yours, you will need to perform reps through a full range of motion with good mechanics.

Don't pay attention to "fasted cardio" and how it's used by physique competitors. It's a decent way to drop body fat, but it's time consuming (i.e. over 45 minutes each morning) and it's not conducive to performance. Walking on an empty stomach for at least 6 hours a week is not how you get strong, and every person I've tried this with has had debilitating performance. Sleep is more important than fasted cardio. I'd rather they sleep an extra hour, feel better, and squat more. Strength performance is necessary for being jacked, therefore performance is our priority.

"Feeling the Muscle"

Have you ever read interviews with successful bodybuilders? Whether it's Arnold Schwarzenegger, Dorian Yates, or Kai Greene, they always talk about "feeling the muscle" or having a good "mind to muscle" connection. It's almost like they "get it" in a way that us mere mortals never could. Don't let their shitty explanation deter you from their message, but this is one tidbit from bodybuilding we *will* use.

Training for muscular growth is subtly different than training for strength, yet the difference will influence the outcome. "Feeling the muscle" is a phrase that basically means trying to maintain tension throughout the full range of motion of that particular muscle. When you squat heavy weight, you're concerned with a) maintaining your technique (e.g. chest up, knees out, etc.) and b) trying to complete the rep (sometimes at the detriment to technique). However, when you're trying to work a muscle to make it grow, you should maintain mechanics to keep the tension high while working the muscle through a full range of motion.

Let me give you a strength-oriented example. In the Romanian Deadlift (RDL), you should push your hips back with un-locked knees so as to stretch the hamstrings as you lower the bar down the front of your thighs.

Figure 1.0. The bottom position of the RDL properly stretches the hamstrings. Shana Alverson owns CrossFit East Decatur.

Yet we are not completing the RDL to move as much weight as possible, we're trying to get a quality stretch and contraction of the hamstrings to help strengthen and grow them near their critical attachment site (right under the butt cheeks). This movement can help strengthen the hamstrings so they can do a better job of maintaining their tension in movements like the deadlift, clean, or snatch. Most trainees will use weights so heavy they're required to alter their mechanics in order to move their large joints through the same range of motion. In other words, they'll load their body differently in order to move the weight. Instead of getting a quality stretch on the proximal hamstring, they will flex their knee to load their quads and unload the hamstrings, and turn the movement into a bastardized deadlift. Quality mechanics are key to hamstring development, not excessive weights.

We will use this same approach for your arms and upper body. When you perform chin-ups or curls, you aren't going to spasmodically throw your body around to complete the movement. You need to isolate the muscle to work it effectively. Specific cues will be described later, but note the emphasis on *working the entire muscle through a full range of motion*.

Progress

Progress in your arm size is dependent on many factors. The most significant is your arm length, which is an aspect of body dimensions. If you're a tall, lanky guy, it'll be much harder to pack muscle onto your arms. If you're a short, stocky guy, chances are you won't have as much trouble and your arm musculature may just need refinement.

Keep this in mind as you use this program. I'm not guaranteeing an inch on your arms, because I'm not a lying piece of shit. Some of you have that potential, and some of you don't. Your genetics, training history, program adherence, nutrition, and body dimensions will have an effect on your progress. If you have neglected arm training, then the inclusion of these exercises will probably yield noticeable results.

Some of you are tall and skinny while others are just plain fat. You'll probably need to adjust your diet to influence your progress. Skinny guys will need to gain lean mass and fat guys will need to lose fat. The entirety of either goal leaves the scope of this book, but you can read more about it in *Paleo for Lifters*.

Big Movements

Earlier you learned why systemically stressful lifts like the squat and deadlift are important, but other compound movements like the press, bench press, barbell row, pull-ups, and dips have precedence over isolation arm work. Muscularity requires strength, and nothing builds strength like big, compound movements. We'll use isolation exercises like curls for the biceps and skull crushers for the triceps, yet they're merely for additional work on the muscle and refinement. Lest you forget, size is built with strength, and the big movements get you stronger.

Inherently, compound movements include more joints, and therefore more musculature. They're more functional given that all of your muscles need to work in synergy to accomplish a large-scale task like putting something overhead. In contrast, single joint exercises cannot accomplish this. Isolation work is for shaping and developing. We're in the business of being strong *and* looking strong. Therefore this program is predicated on getting strong first.

Besides, who do you think will have bigger arms: the guy who can press 185x10 or 95x10?

Linear Progression Basics

How a trainee responds to stress dictates their training advancement as opposed to "how much they know about lifting" or "how strong they are." The term "novice" is reserved for trainees who can recover from stress on a daily basis – in the 48 hours between training sessions. "Intermediate" is a term for a trainee who requires a longer period of recovery, usually on a weekly basis. For more on terms, explanations, and the "how" of strength training, read *FIT* by Dr. Lon Kilgore, Dr. Michael Hartman, and myself.

A linear progression strength program is one that makes nearly linear progress on a daily basis. *The 70's Big LP* is labeled as a type of linear progression, but it also breaches the realm of intermediate programming depending on what "set/rep" schemes you use. "Set/rep schemes" indicates sets and repetitions to be performed for work sets, or the sets in the session that will apply the appropriate stress dose to get stronger. They do not include warm-up sets. Warm-up sets serve to prepare the body for the work sets and should not interfere with them. Warm-ups start with a light weight and increase the weight in even increments; the reps will decrease as the weight increases up to the work sets.

Example of Warm-up Sets
135x5
185x5
225x3
255x1
275x5x3

Figure 1.1.

How to Find Your "Three Sets of Five Reps" Weight

Most linear progressions are based on using a "three sets of five" set/rep scheme. *The 70's Big LP* will use other set/rep schemes, but you should work through the "three sets of five" progression first. If you don't know what weight to use in your work sets and have not completed a linear progression, then use 70% of your 1 repetition max, or 1RM. If you do not have a 1RM, start with the bar for a set of five reps, then continue to add 30 pounds until the weight is moderately challenging. Once you have found such a weight, perform two more sets and call it your first session of "three sets of five". Aim to progress these work sets by five to ten pounds every training session.

If you cannot complete the indicated number of reps, or your technique is crappy, then it is time for a reset. Reduce the work sets in the next training session by about 10%. For example, if your work sets used 265, drop to 240 in the next training session and continue the progression as normal. When you reach 265 for work sets the second time, you will likely complete it without complication.

Repetition Continuum

The number of reps per set will generally yield different adaptations. Lower repetitions (1 to 3) will increase contractile force in muscle without increasing the size. Higher reps in the 8 to 12 range will result in muscle hypertrophy, or growth. Anything over 15 reps concerns muscular endurance. Mid-range reps (5 to 6) have a nice blend of strength training and hypertrophy. This is why most beginner and early intermediate programs use the standard five reps per set. It's few enough reps to not fatigue the trainee during the set, so they can maintain proper mechanics and thus proper force distribution across the relevant muscles for the entire set. This program utilizes the rep continuum by sticking to fives for strength building and around ten reps for hypertrophy specific work.

Chapter 2 – The Program

Let's get down to business. Here is the program:

The 70's Big LP		
Monday	**Wednesday**	**Friday**
Press	Bench	Wtd Dips
Squat	Deadlift	Front Squat
Wtd Chin-up	Barbell Rows	Wtd Pull-up
		RDL
Biceps	Triceps	Biceps

Figure 2.1.

Not much to it, huh? Before you consider your money wasted, allow me to explain this template.

Each session begins fresh with strength training - a pressing movement - followed by high rep back-off sets for growth. Then there's a big movement, like a squat or deadlift, to keep the systemic stress high. Then there's an arm pulling movement – chin-ups, pull-ups, or rows –for growing musculature and improving upper body strength. Lastly, there's arm specific training that focuses on the biceps and triceps because a book about bigger arms wouldn't be complete without them.

To make it all work better than a normal linear progression there are peculiarities to each type of exercise. The following sections will expand on each. The end of the chapter will show a table with it all put together.

The Pressing Movements

Each day starts with a pressing movement so that the lifter is fresh to pour his full rage and intensity into getting stronger in a classic upper body strength exercise. Some linear progressions put the squat or deadlift first, but that will detract from our focused goal of upper body development.

Initially, the set and rep scheme will follow a standard "three sets of five repetitions" – which means the work sets after the warm-up consist of three sets of five reps at the same weight – yet will evolve to allow further progression. If you have not exhausted a linear progression – whether it's your first attempt or you're running another progression after a layoff, sport season, deployment, or injury – then use "three sets of five reps" with incremental loading until it stalls. Consistent, small increases in weight are the key to linear progressions. Since the bench press and press use less weight than larger movements like the squat or deadlift, aim to add five or fewer pounds each session.

People often ask how many times they should reset when using the same work sets for three sets of five repetitions. In standard linear progressions you'd reset several times, but we don't want to waste too much time resetting in *The 70's Big LP*. If the bench is increasing, yet the press is stalled, simply reset the press and continue the bench's linear progression. By accumulating bench and press sessions over time – even if the weight isn't steadily increasing – you will still establish a foundation of musculature. If both lifts are consistently stalling at the same time, and you have completed two or three legitimate resets, as discussed in Chapter 1 – Important Concepts, then you are a candidate for the set/rep schemes in this section.

However, *The 70's Big LP* incorporates weighted pull-ups, chin-ups, and barbell rows. If you haven't been doing these movements and your presses have stalled, see how the presses progress after adding these exercises in. Simply reset with the standard "three sets of five" approach as you add the upper body pulling exercises in and see if they help you push past your previous stall. If they do not, move to the next section.

Ascending Sets Progression for the Presses

If you have exhausted a linear progression, then you'll use an "ascending sets" approach. You'll still use three sets of five reps, but the second and third work sets will increase in an even amount of weight from the first set. For example, if the first set is 185x5, the second would be 190x5 and the third 195x5. The goal is to make the final set increase every workout as opposed to the first set.

Go ahead and use five pound increments when you begin this method, but note that five pounds for someone lifting around 200 pounds is not the same as someone lifting around 150 pounds. To simplify programming, I typically talk in terms of "pounds added to the bar" instead of percentages. A five pound increase for a set at 185 is a 2.7% increase while a five pound increase for a set at 150 is 3.3%. This distinction may be arbitrary, but the increase is a greater relative jump for someone using less weight. Aim to increase each set by 2.5%. So, 150 lbs x .025 = 3.75 lbs. It isn't necessary to be exact, so round the number to 2.5 lbs.

You can use micro-plates, or plates smaller than 2.5 lbs. Options include one pound baseball bat weights for even large washers from a hardware store. Usually you won't need anything smaller than the baseball weights, and even then it's more so for folks lifting less than 150 pounds (e.g., females). This set/rep scheme will change the stress by changing how much weight you will increase between sets, so micro-loading isn't as important as other linear progressions.

Increase the Jumps

All progressions will diminish over time, but there is a method to elongate the *Ascending Sets Progression*. If you've read my *Texas Method* books, you'll be familiar with it. In order to continue your *Ascending Sets Progression*, use larger increments between work sets i.e. *Increase the Jumps*. For example, if your progression ends with your third and final set at 200 pounds (190x5, 195x5, and 200x5),

then increase the jumps between sets to ten pounds. Your next training session would look like 180x5, 190x5, and 200x5. Since sets one and two are at a lower weight, you should be fresher for the final set at 200; over time this method sacrifices overall volume to allow for higher intensity on the final set.

Increase the Jumps Example	
Failed Training Session	**Next Training Session**
190x5	180x5
195x5	190x5
200x4 (failed #5)	200x5

Figure 2.2. Failure due to fatigue or lack of strength calls for an increase in the jumps between sets.

Remember the discussion in the previous section about relative weight increases; if you lift around 150 or 100 pounds, your increases should not be ten pounds. Instead, aim to increase each set by about 5%.

Continue on by increasing the jumps between sets until the jumps are too large to a) prepare you neurologically and physiologically for the final set or b) the first two sets are too light to have a meaningful adaptive stress. Typically the limit of how much you'd want to increase between sets on press is 10 to 12 pounds and bench is 15 to 20 pounds. This limit would be about 7.5 to 10% of an increase each set.

This straightforward progression should last about a month per "jump increase," meaning the progression of "5 pound" should last about a month and moving to "10 pound jumps" should last another month. Overall, the progression may not last as long as your original linear progression. Once you get to a point in which your heavy set of five isn't progressing, you can try resetting from the beginning with the smallest jumps and working towards the largest jumps (e.g. if you progressed 12 pound jumps on the press, reset the weight and use 5 pound jumps again, then 7.5 pounds, and then 10 pounds and see if you move past your stall). If you don't think a reset will be productive, move to the next set/rep scheme. Note the inclusion of exercises like weighted pull-ups and chin-ups, barbell rows, and dips will have a positive effect on the bench press and press. Factor in this new *Ascending Sets* approach, and you should have pleasant progress.

Review of Increase the Jumps				
	Amount of Increase Between Sets			
Bench Press (lbs)	5	10	15	20
Press (lbs)	2.5	5	7.5	10
% for Bench and Press	2.5%	5%	7.5%	10%

Figure 2.3. Each column represents how many pounds will be increased between the work sets. Once the trainee has exhausted a progression with five pound jumps, he will switch to ten pound jumps and do the same. The poundage used for the bench press and press are estimates based on the percent values in the third row. Percent values are more relevant for weaker people (lifting lower than 150 pounds).

The Triples and Fives Alternate

We will now do the unthinkable in a linear progression: we will use sets of three repetitions. Instead of using them all of the time, triples and fives will be alternated. Week A will use fives and Week B will use triples. The triples in Week B can initially be treated like a "three sets of three" with the same weight for each set, but you will eventually use the *Ascending Sets Progression* with the triples. It's used the exact same way as described above, yet each set now has three reps.

Using triples allows you to lift more weight increasing the overall intensity with the trade-off of decreased volume. Using the *Ascending Sets Progression* with triples will allow you to push your triple even higher. The intensity itself applies an adaptive stress that will carry over on the next Week A to help push the "ascending fives" sets while the fives serves as a volume dose to push the triples. Week A and Week B provide different stresses resulting in progress in both weeks. To clarify, the *Ascending Sets Progression* means the weight increases between the three work sets while *Increase the Jumps* describes how you can increase the amount of weight between sets over time. Using them together will drive progress for a very long time.

This is essentially an early intermediate programming technique that takes advantage of benching and pressing each once a week, yet creates a two-week wave approach to the volume and intensity. To avoid confusion, I keep both the bench and the press on similar relative weight increases. For example, both lifts would be on a 2.5% jump increase and both would move to a 5% increase together. This keeps the dosages of volume and intensity similar for both exercises and helps the long-term progression.

Example of the Triples and Fives Alternate						
	Press			Bench Press		
A	185x5	190x5	195x5	270x5	275x5	280x5
B	205x3	210x3	215x3	295x3	300x3	305x5

Figure 2.4. Week A uses ascending sets of five while Week B uses ascending triples.

Drop Sets

In order to accumulate more work on the pressing musculature – as well as getting a set in a hypertrophy rep range – lifters can perform a drop set for reps. This doesn't need to be with a significant weight; something as light as 60% of 1RM will suffice, but more than 15% off the work set weight. Hitting 8 to 12 reps with this lighter weight won't drastically alter the overall stress of the session, but it will require the muscles to execute reps while fatigued and drive blood into the muscles, both of which will help accumulate jackedness and a sense of accomplishment. Once one drop set is consistently used, the lifter can start doing two drop sets as long as the weight is light enough to not interfere with recovery.

Examples of Drop Sets		
	Press	**Bench Press**
Last Set	200 lbs	300 lbs
Drop Set (-15%)	170 lbs	255 lbs

Figure 2.5. Note that the drops should be at least 15% so the weight isn't heavy enough to interfere with recovery.

Upper Body Compound Exercises

The set and rep schemes described for the pressing movements are effective in increasing strength in those lifts, but they are *significantly* aided by the upper body pulling exercises like the weighted pull-up, weighted chin-up, and the barbell row. It's no surprise that linear progressions that neglect these movements yield lifters with small upper bodies and weak press numbers.

Pressing movements develop the front deltoids, the pectorals, and the triceps yet there are many more muscles that help stabilize and strengthen the shoulder. For example, the lats extend and internally rotate the shoulder, yet they also apply tension and stability when the elbows are externally rotated during the bench, press, and dip. Other muscles like the rotator cuff (supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor, subscapularis), teres major, the traps, the rhomboids, and biceps are the sole stabilizers of the shoulder girdle. Note the shoulder girdle does not have any bony articulation with the rest of the skeleton; it is held in place by all of these muscles and soft tissue. Furthermore, despite the glenohumeral joint (or shoulder joint) being called a "ball and socket" joint, the "socket" (the glenoid fossa) is merely a slight divot that the head of the humerus (upper arm bone) articulates with. All of these muscles around the shoulder and scapula hold the humerus to the glenoid fossa, the glenoid fossa is part of the scapula, and then more musculature holds the scapula to the rest of the skeleton. All of these muscles must work in unison to hold the scapulae in place and move the humerus. Neglecting their development means less stability and strength.

This is the reason why isolation exercises are worthless in creating functional strength; the shoulder does not work in isolation. To put something overhead safely, all of these muscles must stabilize the shoulder joint itself in order to allow it to apply force. When using proper mechanics, all of these muscles will contribute to stabilization and force application. If any of these muscles are neglected and

underdeveloped, the lifter will compensate by moving into mechanically disadvantageous positions – the type of position that incorrectly loads various structures and allows for acute and chronic injury.

Due to a lack of skeletal support and reliance on soft tissue, the shoulder is more susceptible to injury. This results in a greater range of motion at the expense of less stability. The integrity of that soft tissue is paramount in preventing injury, and large compound movements are the best way to strengthen these muscles.

Getting strong in upper body pulling movements not only allows these muscles to grow, but the strength and size directly improves the pressing movements. Upper body pulling exercises not only compliment the *Ascending Sets*, *Increase the Jumps*, and *The Triples and Fives Alternate* set and rep scheme methods for the presses, but they are necessary to achieve genetic potential in the presses. Not to mention having big lats makes your arms look bigger since your triceps will sit on the girth of the lats, effectively pushing the triceps out at rest to let the world marvel at your arm thickness. Bigger lats make a guy look wider, but doing rows and deadlifts will make him thicker front-to-back, which is a tell-tale sign of a real lifter. See the Appendix for more on how the lats contribute to the bench press.

Chin-ups and Pull-ups

Both of these exercises are included because of their utility in strengthening the shoulder and developing upper body mass. Chin-ups are performed with the forearms supinated, or palms facing the lifter. Pull-ups are performed with the forearms pronated, or palms facing away from the lifter. Any coach who preaches only performing one of the two exercises does not have an appreciation for mechanics and anatomy.

Both movements focus on shoulder extension and elbow flexion, yet the angle of the humerus is different. The chin-up inherently has more external shoulder rotation when the elbows are pointed straight forward and the pull-up comparatively has a bit more internal rotation. This change in rotation doesn't neglect specific muscles – i.e. pull-ups still work the biceps – but it shifts the emphasis of the muscles. By performing these vertical pulling exercises with two different humeral angles, the shoulder is more fully developed and strengthened.

The programming template states pull-ups and chin-ups will be performed weighted. The lifter's goal should be to start loading these exercises as soon as possible to take advantage of progressive loading. If the lifter cannot perform a pull-up, then see the Appendix on how to develop a pull-up. Once the lifter can perform three bodyweight repetitions, they can start loading their sets with as little as five pounds.

Lifters can be creative with how they load themselves. A dip belt makes it easiest, but plates, dumbbells, kettlebells, or any object can be secured with nylon strap or a chain. The implement can also be secured over the hips, the knees, the feet, or inside a back pack.

The quality of pull-ups and chin-ups should remain high. Extend the shoulder enough at the top of each rep so the chin clears the bar without excessive strain on the neck. At the bottom of the rep, extend the

elbows fully; a common fault is to keep the elbows flexed and therefore miss out on the bottom range of motion. This fails to develop the lats, triceps, and biceps fully. It's okay – and beneficial – to use a stretch reflex, or slight bounce, out of the bottom of each rep, but this is accomplished by fully locking out the shoulders and elbows at the bottom to achieve the greatest stretch. Weighted sets will get difficult, but maintain this emphasis on good mechanics for best results. If a rep does not meet these simple requirements, do not count it in your training log.

Three Sets of Five

Initially, a simple three sets of five repetitions progression can be used. This means the lifter will use the same weight for all three sets, and then increase that number the following session. The weight increases can be micro loaded; the fact that weighted reps are performed consistently over time is more important than increasing too fast and stalling out. Once the "three sets of five" progression stalls out, use the *Ascending Sets Progression.*

Note the template only has pull-ups and chin-ups each once a week, so each exercise will be treated separately and progressed each week. After completing the three sets, do a maximal repetition set with just bodyweight for additional work. If the max rep set consists of fewer than ten reps, then accumulate singles, doubles, or triples until you satisfy a predetermined volume goal of 10 to 15 reps. When first using this method, pick a low number and increase it over time. This "volume accumulation" method can be added after any of the set/rep schemes below.

Example of Ascending Sets Progression
45x5
50x5
55x5

Figure 2.6.

Three Sets of Five with a Drop Set

Once the work sets reach about 50 pounds, the lifter can add a drop set of maximal repetitions at 25 pounds after the initial work sets. The lifter can follow this up with the normal max rep set at bodyweight.

Three Sets of Five with Drop Sets
45x5
50x5
55x5
25 x reps
BW x reps

Figure 2.7.

Three Sets of Three with Drop Sets

When the "three sets of five reps" progression doesn't progress for several sessions, switch to triples. The lifter should be able to continue adding weight consistently. Since there is a drop in volume, be sure to incorporate more drop set reps. Note that the greater the weight used, the more drop sets can be performed. For example, when I was using 70 to 90 pounds for work sets, I would- perform a drop set of max reps with 50 pounds, 25 pounds, and then body weight. I actually set a PR of 21 body weight reps doing this, which surprised the hell out of me.

Three Sets of Three with Drop Sets
70x3x3
50 x reps
25 x reps
BW x reps

Figure 2.8.

Heavy then volume

If you have progressed to this point, you have either gotten pretty strong or are not a heavy person. Create a rep scheme that aims to use a lot of weight, anywhere from 1 to 5 reps, and is followed by back-off sets with weight. Benchmarks can include: total weight of 300 pounds (body weight plus added weight), 50 pounds for 10 reps, 25 pounds for 20 reps, and body weight for 20 reps. Hitting these numbers while weighing over 200 pounds is impressive and will definitely have an effect on upper body size and strength.

Three Sets of Three with Drop Sets
90x1
70x3
50 x reps
25 x reps
BW x reps

Figure 2.9.

Starr Method

A 70's Big reader originally pointed this Bill Starr method out to me. It consists of rotating through these three weeks:

Starr Method	
A	8RM
B	5RM + -50 lb rep out
C	3RM + -50 lb rep out

Figure 2.10.

The session's goal is to achieve a repetition max, or the most weight you can handle for the indicated number of repetitions. Weeks B and C include a drop set that is 50 pounds lower than the weight used on the rep max. Lifters can also add in rep maxes of 25 pounds and body weight as described above.

The Max Method

This method has the lifter perform weighted singles up to a max followed by back-off sets for reps. I started programming it for females who still couldn't perform more than five body weight pull-ups at a time, but were able to do weighted singles with anywhere from 2.5 to 20 pounds. Accumulating weighted reps will only help them progress their un-weighted pull-ups, but it will also help their overall upper body strength.

Each session the lifter can try to hit a higher single than the session before. Over time, her goal is to increase her 1RM. If she doesn't set a new 1RM, then she can lower the weight and accumulate weighted singles or doubles. The one constant is that she will always perform back-off sets after going as heavy as she can that day and will end with bodyweight reps.

Note that this method can yield different effects. For a female who can't do more than five bodyweight pull-ups or 20 pounds of added weight for a single, these weighted reps will be a low to medium stress. If a male who was capable of 50, 75, or 100 pound weighted pull-ups used this method, it would be much more stressful for him and he would probably not be able to maintain it on a weekly basis. *The Max Method* probably works best for lifters with a weak pull-up.

While these progressions are laid out in a logical order, the main goal is to increase the weight used on pull-ups and chin-ups over time, but to do so consistently. Getting 12 weeks of quality weighted work is more important than what weight is actually used. By training both pull-ups and chin-ups, there are two opportunities in the week to work this range of motion. Progress in these movements is not only tangible, but the effects will be seen on the pressing movements and in the mirror.

The Max Method
20x1
10x1x5
BWx1x8

Figure 2.11. After singling on up to a heavy single, back off sets are done with weight, and then bodyweight.

Barbell Rows

There are different kinds of rows that serve different purposes, but heavy barbell rows will develop the upper back, shoulder extensors, and elbow flexors. I started using them more in programming when I talked with a lifter named Ray at Quest Gym in Duluth, GA. He was coached by Sherman Ledford, who has coached many IPF World Champion and World Record holders. After I watched Ray bench 405 for a pretty simple raw triple (at 24 years old and weighing a very lean 232 pounds), he explained how heavy rowing movements are useful for developing stability in the bench press. I listened.

The upper back is important in all of the major lifts, including the squat, deadlift, bench, and press. It is also vital in the front squat, snatch (pull and overhead position), clean, and jerk stabilization. A thick upper back is the marker of being a real lifter instead of a silly "gym goer" since trap and upper back thickness is neglected in mirror-training populations (you can't train what you can't see in the mirror, right?).

Proper barbell rows are referred to as "Pendlay Rows" online, and each rep starts and stops on the floor. This mainly allows the lifter to get some momentum at the beginning of the rep so it can be rowed to the upper abdomen area. When the legs apply momentum at the start of the lift, it allows much heavier weight to be used than a conventional "hold the bar in your hands during the whole set" row (these are often called "Yates Rows" online, named after Dorian Yates). By having momentum in the beginning of the rep, the lifter can avoid any excessive "English" from occurring at the top range of motion; the spasmodic movement that drops the chest lower to complete a row does not work the back muscles effectively. Lifters should generate momentum off the floor with the legs, but avoid dropping the chest as the bar is rowed into the abdomen for maximum efficacy. The bar will go up to the body, not the body down to the bar.

It is said that Ed Coan would regularly do this style of rowing with well over 500 pounds. Coan's best deadlift was 901 pounds, and he set over 70 World Records in powerlifting and won World Championships in four different weight classes. Barbell rows are the preferred row in this program.

Figure 2.12. Chris Riley demonstrates the barbell row with 345 lbs.

Dumbbell rows could be used as well, yet since most gyms don't have dumbbells over 150 pounds (and in some cases smaller), there is more overload possible using the barbell variation. The hamstrings, hips, and lumbar muscles also get a bit of stress with barbell rows since they must maintain positioning as each rep is pulled off of the floor.

Yates Rows, T-Bar rows, or cable rows can all be used as a substitute, though only after linearly progressing the Pendlay rows; the execution of the Pendlay variation allows for much more weight to be used, therefore making the lifter stronger and giving the legs and hips ancillary work for overall strength.

Yates Rows are the type of row where the bar is held in the hands throughout the entire set without setting the barbell down. T-bar rows require the T-bar bench available in most commercial gyms; the handles include pronated, supinated, and neutral grip. Cable rows are also available in commercial gyms and have a variety of handle attachments, though the neutral grip probably has the highest utility. There are many different types of rows with various grip placements, but all of them are irrelevant without strength. Focus on getting the barbell rows above 225 pounds for three sets of five with 300 pounds for reps as your goal. If you use any of the non-barbell variations, focus on squeezing your shoulder blades together with a pause at the top of the rep to work the scapula (shoulder blade) stabilizers.

Barbell rows will be trained like a primary movement by doing three sets of five reps. Feel free to incorporate back-off sets, similar to the press section. If you are using single arm variations with dumbbells or kettlebells, aim for 3 to 5 sets of 5 to 10 reps, favoring the higher reps. Single arm stuff has a tendency to use more English, so increase the quality by backing off with the weight and getting more reps per set.

Rowing Methods	
Rowing Methods In Order of Preference	**Proposed Set/rep Scheme**
Barbell/Pendlay	3x5, drop set optional
Yates	3x8
Dumbbell	3x10
T-Bar	3x10
Cable	3x10
Kettlebell	3x15 (due to likely lighter load)

Figure 2.13. Note: Pendlay rows are preferred in this program.

Upper Body Isolation Exercises

Each day has biceps and triceps tacked onto the end of the workout. Muscle magazines teach you that this is where your money is made for arm size, but they couldn't be more wrong. All of your real strength and size work was done with the heavy pressing and pulling early in the workout. Allowing some isolation work merely serves the purpose of a) getting some extra volume on these muscles, b) allowing the lifter to catch a pump and feel righteous, and c) potentially help the muscles grow without applying too much stress.

I advise lifters to not worry about isolation work during their first month on this program. If the lifter is not used to hitting his upper body pulling muscles every day that he presses, then isolation work is not only unnecessary for growth, but can irritate the elbows and be debilitating to recovery. The priority is always on getting stronger first. Once the lifter adapts to this program and its higher work load, he can add the isolation movements in if they don't interfere with recovery.

When isolation movements are added, the aim is to do them *correctly*; make the muscle do the work instead of the rest of the body. No spasmodic convulsions to curl the weight up, and no excessive lean-over-lunging to press a cable triceps extension down. Use a good hip-width stance, brace the trunk in neutral position, and force the muscles to move the weight with maximum tension. This isn't strength training; this is muscle isolation to exclusively give it work. This is the "mind-muscle" connection that bodybuilders ramble about. Muscle tension is more important than the weight lifted.

First, add in one exercise for three sets of 8 to 12 reps. You're probably reading this wondering if you should do sets across, ascending sets, or what, but just do three sets of ten reps *correctly*. Generally speaking, always add something into your program in the simplest manner, progress it, then start tweaking it. You will garner progress because of the inclusion of the exercise, not because of how you organized the set, reps, or rest of the exercise.

Second, add in a second exercise working the same muscles. Keep the set and rep scheme simple (e.g. a linear progression with three sets of ten). After progressing two exercises, you can start playing around with the variables to merely catch a pump. Use methods like super sets, rest-pause, and running the rack to do so.

Fool Proof Isolation Exercise Programming	
Step 1	Pick an exercise
Step 2	Progress it for a while with 3x10
Step 3	Add a second exercise with 3x10
Step 4	Progress both for a while
Step 5	Add super sets, rest-pause, or running the rack

Figure 2.14. Don't spend a lot of time programming this stuff.

Super Sets

This is one of the oldest bodybuilding traditions. You merely execute a set of something immediately followed by another. In our case, do your first exercise, then immediately do the second without rest. The reason this is effective is because it takes advantage of a low rest period. Lower rest periods have been shown to increase muscle size compared to longer rest periods, and that's why they are typically used in bodybuilding programs. Ignoring the research, if you think about the physiology it makes sense. You are fatiguing the metabolic capabilities of the muscle with the first set, and then asking the muscle to conduct more work with a slightly different movement while fatigued. The slightly different movement allows for some work to be done, and the fatigue is the adaptive stress the body isn't used to. In other words, doing a set while in a specific metabolic fatigue makes the muscle adapt to handle it easier in the future, and in this case, the long-term adaptation is a bigger muscle. Not to mention the extra sets push blood into the muscle making any man feel temporarily like a god.

Super Set Example	
Barbell Rows	135x8
Hammer Curls	35x10 each arm

Figure 2.15. Perform three total sets of this super set.

Rest-Pause Sets

This method merely requires the lifter to perform their first set, set the weight down for a short rest period (10 to 30 seconds), then pick the weight back up and perform the same exercise for as many reps as possible. Typically there are several rest-pauses in a single set. If a lifter can do an exercise for a maximum of 12 reps in a set, and he rest-pauses three times for 8, 8, and 6 reps, he completed 22 reps in the set compared to one set of 12 reps. Physiologically it functions in the same way as super sets (i.e. forcing contraction from a fatigued muscle), but with the addition of greater total reps. If you plan on doing this, use it on your second arm exercise as it will act as a finisher. You could rest-pause three times per set – three lifting and pause sessions in one set. You could rest-pause as many sets as you can with a

given weight – use a single weight and perform rest-pause until failure. Or you could plan on rest-pausing "x" amount of times with no sets – perform the x number of rest-pauses as opposed to doing sets of rest-pause.

I kind of hate myself for going into so much detail about rest-pause because this much thought shouldn't really go into isolation exercises. Just pick something and do it.

Rest-Pause Example			
Sets	**Rest-Pause Reps**		
1	8	6	4
2	8	6	4
3	8	6	4

Figure 2.16. Each set has three rest-pauses. There are 54 total reps in this example. This many reps isn't necessary for this program, but it shows the potential the rest-pause sets have in increasing total work completed. Lifters should start out with fewer sets and rest-pause reps.

Running the Rack

This method works well as a finisher with limited time. Choose a weight, execute the set, set it down, and then do it again with a lighter weight until you've moved down your rack. It isn't necessary to perform sets with the *entire* rack. You can begin with the intention of doing three to five sets of however many repetitions and decrease by five or ten pounds after each set. You can rest for a few seconds (rest-pause style) or just immediately start the next set. It really doesn't matter with all of this stuff; you're just catching a pump before leaving the gym so everyone can admire your cephalic vein on the head of the biceps. This method should only be done once and is the last exercise in the workout because it will be significantly fatiguing. It works well when time is short.

Running the Rack Example with Dumbbell Alternating Curls	
Weight	**Reps**
50	6
45	6
40	8
35	8
30	10

Figure 2.17. The reps per weight don't need to be high since there are plenty of sets.

Potential Exercises

There are hundreds, potentially thousands, of exercises you can use for your arms. You can look at books like *Arnold Schwarzenegger's Encyclopedia of Bodybuilding* to not only appreciate them all, but learn exactly how to do them. In this program you will have four options for the biceps and four for the triceps. Two will be oriented for size building while the other two are more for shaping and developing. Could you use other exercises in your gym? Probably, but the truth is you'll start putting more effort into

picking an exercise that is ironically the least important part of getting bigger arms. Rowing more, doing a pull-up with 100 lbs attached to you, and pressing bodyweight are the real key to bigger arms. Nevertheless, here are the exercises that have never been allowed in a linear progression. Until this day.

Biceps

- **Dumbbell Hammer Curls** – I always say that if I were going to prescribe one type of curl, this would be it. It includes the brachioradialis, a forearm muscle, which is less relevant in other types of curls. Hammer curls get solid work on the forearms; why would a man want to increase his upper arm and neglect his forearms? They are what stick out when your flannel shirt is rolled up. Never swing or use body English with dumbbells. Curl one dumbbell at a time, keep the elbows pinned to the sides, hold each contraction at the top, and squeeze the hell out of your biceps. Consider this a shaping exercise.

- **Dumbbell Alternating Curls** – This is one of the best exercises for fully activating the biceps. Start with the dumbbells hanging at your sides with the hands facing into the hips. Begin the rep like a hammer curl and slowly transition into a supinated, or palm up, grip as the rep is finished. Think about the pinky touching the outside of the shoulder, but not at the extent of letting the elbows move away from the ribs or lats. Finish with slight shoulder flexion by pulling the elbow forward and up to fully activate the proximal attachment of the biceps. This is more of a shaping exercise, but you'll be surprised at its potential for growth.

- **Barbell Curls** – This classic curl is for size, all the way. Hold the bar with a shoulder width grip so when the weight is curled up, the forearms are vertical. Pause at the top, like all curls, to contract the muscles, and lower under control. This is the only exercise where English is acceptable and sometimes preferred. If you can regularly curl 95 pounds for a set of ten, throw on those 45s and get ready for 135. Add a bit of English with your hips at the *start* of the movement – *NOT* the finish at the top – to help get the weight moving. This can save the elbows from experiencing significant stress when the weight is at its most mechanically disadvantageous position: near the bottom as the elbows extend. If you cannot curl the weight from the mid-point up without using more English, then it's too heavy.

- **Preacher Curls** – This requires a preacher bench that will only be available in the most Globlowy of Globo Gyms. Set the seat height so your armpits are comfortably on the top of the pad, use a straight or EZ bar (which looks like a zig zag), and perform controlled reps. The preacher bench is designed to keep the elbows stationary and the shoulders in flexion in order to isolate the biceps. Don't ruin the engineering by wiggling around on the seat. If you look like you're trying to steer a large tractor with a tiny wheel, the weight is too heavy. Consider this a size building exercise.

Figure 2.18. Chris Riley does barbell curls. He can deadlift over 700 lbs.

Triceps

Contrary to popular belief triceps, not biceps, are what makes an arm look big. Keep this in mind as you're knocking those curls out. The only reason there is only one day of triceps work compared to two biceps is because the triceps get daily work with the pressing and pulling movements (the triceps' proximal function is to extend the shoulder, so they are involved in rows and pull-ups).

- **Cable Press Downs** – This is another GoBlow Gym Special since you'll need cables and pulleys to make it happen. The V-Bar attachment is preferred, but a rope will do. The movement begins with the elbows pinned to the ribs bent at 90 degrees with the hands in a neutral grip facing each other. Simply drive through the base of the hand towards the ground until the elbows are extended. At the finish the arms should be mostly vertical. If using the V-Bar attachment, the finish will be in front of your crotch. The rope can finish in front of the crotch, or spread the hands apart. A split stance – with one foot forward and one back – is beneficial to maintaining balance and good posture throughout this movement. The problem most people have is attempting too much weight and contorting their body like they are trying to stuff ten pounds of shit into a five pound sack. Don't be silly, use an appropriate weight, and work your triceps through a full range of motion. This is a size building exercise, but also a shaping exercise.

- **Overhead Triceps Extension** – A variety of implements can be used for this, but dumbbells work best. When using a dumbbell, make a diamond with both hands and place them around the grip so the palms are facing down on the bottom bell. Next, turn the bell upside down so you are holding dumbbell overhead with your palms facing up, fingers pointed to the rear, and the top of the bell is

in your hands. The key to overhead triceps work is keeping the elbows close to the head which keeps the shoulders in external rotation – a safe position that allows the entire triceps to be worked. If you cannot keep the elbows close to the head, then use lighter weight. If you use the barbell variation, use a shoulder-width grip that will result in the forearms being vertical at lockout. This is a size building exercise.

- **Skull Crushers** – Despite the name, the goal is not to crush your skull. Lie on a bench and use a light barbell with a shoulder-width grip as if you're starting a close grip bench. There should not be any shoulder movement as you bend the elbows to lower the bar to your forehead. The elbows should point vertically up throughout the movement. Extend the elbows to return to the starting position. Start with an un-loaded bar and use small jumps; you'll probably use less weight than you thought you could. This is a shaping exercise.

- **Triceps Kick Backs** – You can use most one handed implements, including cables or bands, to perform this movement. However you set up – whether you simply bend over, place one hand on a box, or put one hand and knee on a bench – your upper arm should remain in line with your torso throughout the entire movement. The elbow will stay pinned to the ribs. The starting position has the elbow bent to 90 degrees; simply extend the elbow until the entire arm is in line with the torso. This is a shaping exercise.

Weighted Dips

The presence of weighted dips is different from normal linear progressions; most will just continue cycling the press and bench press. I originally started programming dips in this third training session for a few reasons. First, once a lifter starts exhausting his linear progression with the press and bench, it gets very difficult to yield progress. Performing one of the movements twice a week with similar set and rep schemes doesn't really provide any benefit other than the added volume. I found that using the set and rep schemes described in the pressing section above helped drive pressing strength with the help of all of the upper body pulling work. Merely continuing to increase the bench or press with a micro load results in relatively slower progress because the lifter is performing near their "three sets of five" max regularly and there isn't a variable that acts as an adaptive stress. In contrast, the methods described in the pressing section alter the intensity and volume to push the weekly load up.

Second, when programming intermediate programs, like the various Texas Method templates I've created, I found that the first two assistance exercises to push the press and bench press are the close grip bench and the weighted dip. Weighted dips effectively train the triceps, anterior shoulder, and pectorals. When discussing weighted dips, I always think of Pat Casey, the first man to bench 600 pounds. In an old Iron Mind issue, there was a picture of him dipping with an additional 300 pounds while weighing 300 pounds – it's easy to see how that could equate to a 600 pound bench.

Third, weighted dips are *different*. Some linear progressions are considered boring. Personally, seeing my strength improve is more important than variety in my program, but I can be sympathetic to pressing

boredom. As amazing as the press and bench press are, the weighted dip will augment both exercises and help build mass in the chest, triceps, and shoulders when executed with good mechanics. And it might be different enough to spark an interest out of a bored lifter.

Weighted dips will initially be performed with three sets of five reps and progressed linearly. The same set and rep schemes for pull-ups and chin-ups can be used for weighted dips: three sets of three with drop sets, heavy then volume, and the Starr method.

Note that weighted dips have a tendency to cause soreness at the proximal biceps attachment under the anterior deltoid (i.e. the long head of the biceps attaches on the supraglenoid tubercle on the scapula, but it passes through the intertubercular groove on the head of the humerus, and this is where soreness develops after dips). Soreness is expected at first, so lifters should ease into high loads or high reps with this exercise. Perform them with just body weight for reps in the first session.

10-8-6 Method

For the sake of variety, the trainee can use the 10-8-6 Method, something a young Justin Lascek created in his bodybuilding days. Simply do three sets of ten in week A, eight in week B, and six in week B. The decrease in reps naturally allows more weight to be used. Progress the sets of ten when you rotate back to them. Keep the weight challenging while maintaining good technique. Otherwise, use the set/rep schemes from the pull-up section.

10-8-6 Example	
Week A	3x10
Week B	3x8
Week C	3x6

Figure 2.19. Back off sets are optional; see the pull-up set/rep sections.

The lifter could press or bench instead of doing weighted dips, especially if they are early in their linear progression when doing the movement twice a week is still beneficial. If they are farther along their bench and press progression, and don't want to use the weighted dip for whatever reason (e.g. they have shoulder pathology, no access to dip bars, etc.), then they could use the close grip bench.

The Close Grip Bench

This lift is performed nearly identically to the normal bench press, but with a narrower grip. Most lifters will place their hands on the inside knurling ring (where the smooth section stops). When lowering the bar to the chest, the lifter should aim to keep the forearms vertical, but will keep the elbows close to the body. Cues for this are "elbows to ribs", "biceps to lats", or "tuck the elbows." Cues like "drive the elbows through the bar" will usually ensure the triceps are worked maximally.

Set/rep schemes should look like the barbell row: 3 to 5 sets of 5 to 10 reps. Back-off sets can be performed. Treat this lift like the accessory movement it is instead of a primary pressing movement; there's no need to exhaust a "three sets of five" progression as it can provide too much stress, especially for late stage novices and early stage intermediate lifters.

Squatting

How squatting is programmed in this program is different than traditional linear progressions. LPs like *Starting Strength* put an emphasis on squatting three times a week. This certainly isn't a bad plan for young lifters without a training base, but most populations benefit from less squatting – two days a week in particular.

Squatting is imperative to getting stronger, both because of the local work it accomplishes on the legs and hips, but also the systemic stress and subsequent hormonal response to augment strength adaptation. Each training day has a large movement, whether it is a squat or a deadlift, to take advantage of this hormonal response.

The Front Squat

This particular program also includes the front squat on the Friday session. This fits with the "late stage linear progression" theme this program has; most people who shift into this program probably have some sort of strength base or linear progression experience. The presence of the front squat accomplishes several things.

First, it is a lower stress squat variant. If the lifter was nearing their limit of how far they can linearly progress their squat, focusing on the back squat in one balls-to-the-wall session on Monday will let them extend their progression on the squat while working on their upper body strength and musculature. Or if the lifter was older or otherwise doesn't recover well, the lower stress front squat still allows them to push their back squat early in the week and still put forth a lower stress squatting effort later in the week via the front squat.

Second, the front squat augments the back squat itself. It can help build the anterior chain to help the middle of the ascent of the low bar squat as well as directly supporting the high bar squat musculature.

Third, the front squat's mechanics are necessary for budding CrossFitters and Olympic Weightlifters. Both competitive endeavors utilize vertical torso squatting movements, and the front squat will help teach proper mechanics and muscular adaptation to support snatching, cleaning, wall balls, and thrusters. The front squat is also vital for various strongman events.

Fourth, it provides variation to what can sometimes be a boring linear progression. Again, I'd rather get stronger and perform better compared to "being entertained" with a training program, but having some variation matters to casual lifters. They have my blessing of variety in this linear progression.

Programming the front squat effectively allows a good effort on Friday without burning out on the back squat progression, provides a systemic stress to piggy back a hormonal effect on the upper body work, helps round out mechanics and muscular development, and can teach motor pathways of other sports (e.g. weightlifting, CrossFit, strongman, etc.).

Sets and reps should be handled in a standard three sets of five reps fashion. By only back squatting once a week, the lifter should be able to extend their back squat progression. The front squat progression should be able to progress for many weeks, especially if the lifter hasn't used it regularly in training prior. After several resets, they can use the set/rep schemes later in this section.

The Back Squat

Regardless if you use the low bar or high bar squat (see the Appendix for the distinction), back squatting occurs once, maybe twice a week in this program. If you feel you need or want to back squat on Friday, then replace front squats with back squats. Otherwise, focus on having a strong, heavy three sets of five reps session on Monday. Note that if you perform back squats on Friday, they may be hampered by Wednesday's deadlift session, so plan accordingly. An example would be pushing the three sets of five hard every week on Monday, and then doing a light to medium three sets of five back squat on Friday.

If you are less concerned with your squatting strength – whether because you solely care about your upper body (which I do not recommend) or you have appropriately exhausted a linear progression – you could always use this back squat session as a medium stress. Performing 80-85% of your best three sets of five will keep some squat volume on you and still provide the systemic stress to help the upper body develop.

Other set and rep schemes can be used for Monday's back squat session, though they can detract from the benefits of a linear progression. It just depends on the individual lifter's state of adaptation and what their goals are. For example, if a lifter wanted to push his deadlift hard along with his upper body lifts, he would opt out of balls-out Monday back squat workouts to ensure that his Wednesday deadlift sessions were fresh. Yet, a different lifter may want to maintain his deadlift and push his back squat, in which case he would go balls-out on the Monday session – it just depends on the goals and adaptation.

Figure 2.20. Chris Riley squats 585.

Three Sets of Three

Performing fewer reps per set will allow more weight to be used, but the lifter should be cognizant of the decrease in overall volume or tonnage. It wouldn't hurt to perform a drop set for additional reps, whether it's two triples at a lower weight, or just one drop set for five to eight reps. Decrease 10 to 15% off the work set weight for drop sets with triples. Drop sets for maximum reps will probably be around 75 to 80% of 1RM. Keep in mind that the more variation there is week to week, the less quantifiable the stress and therefore the results are. For example, it's not a big deal to use drop sets every week or to go for a repetition maximum, but if the type of drop set changes each week, the metric of quantified stress is not easy to track. This may matter in a very controlled program where the lifter is on the brink of too much stress.

After stalling on the "three sets of three" with sets across progression, transition into an *Ascending Sets Progression* as explained in the press section earlier in the chapter. Lifters who want to back squat instead of front squat on Friday should treat Monday's "three sets of three" as a heavy session while Friday is a light to medium stress. Simply use a three sets of five with 70-85% of the highest "three by five" weight. If you're confused on where to start and what progression to shift into, then see Figure 2.21. below.

Chronological List of Squat Progressions Example
3x5
3x5 ascending
3x3
3x3 ascending
Weekly alternate of 3x5 ascending and 3x3 ascending

Figure 2.21. Each set/rep scheme should be progressed until exhaustion before moving to the next. This is a proposed list for lifters who don't know where to start.

Ascending Sets Progression for Squatting

If the lifter is a linear progression veteran, he may have been constrained to three work sets at the same weight. By using ascending sets, he can perform more weight on the third and final set because the preceding sets were lighter. If the lifter previously performed 365 for three sets of five, his three ascending sets could be:

Ascending sets based on a previous 365x5	
1	355x5
2	365x5
3	375x5

Figure 2.22. This is an example of the first ascending sets workout based on previously squatting 365 for three sets of five.

There is a method of progressing ascending sets I describe in detail in *The Texas Method: Advanced*, but the concept is predicated on how large the jumps are. When you first transition into ascending sets, keep the jumps small (5 to 10 pounds). As the final set increases over time and gets harder, increase the size of the jumps between sets in order to reduce the fatigue present for the third set. In other words, if we wanted less stress on the lifter in the example above, we could increase the jumps to 15 pounds each. Assuming the lifter still intends to hit 375x5 on the last set:

Example of Increasing the Jumps Between Sets	
1	345x5
2	360x5
3	375x5

Figure 2.23. If the lifter failed or had trouble completing the workout in Figure 2.20., this figure represents the next progression using the Increase the Jumps *method. The last set remains the same, but there are 15 pound jumps between sets instead of 10 pounds.*

The only caveat is that the jumps between sets shouldn't be greater than 20 pounds (i.e. jumping from 340 to 360 is the most you should jump, unless you are working in over 450 pounds). This set/rep scheme essentially strings out a squat progression over a longer period of time to allow the lifter to build his lagging upper body.

Note that the percentages from the press section don't necessarily work here. Ten percent (10%) of 350 is 35 pounds, and that would be too great of a jump. Instead, percentages of increase are 1.25%, 2.5%, 3.75%, and 5.0%. Keep in mind that these are percentage increases based on the previous set's weight.

Review of Increase the Jumps for Squat			
5 lbs	10 lbs	15 lbs	20 lbs
1.25%	2.5%	3.75%	5%

Figure 2.24. Each column represents how many pounds will be increased between the work sets. Once the trainee has exhausted a progression with five pound jumps, he will switch to ten pound jumps and do the same. The second row represents percent increases in weight for the squat; for use below 200 pounds or over 450 pounds.

Deadlift and Romanian Deadlift (RDL)

The deadlift and RDL should be included in any quality strength program. They provide a systemic stress to augment the upper body work, but also serve specific purposes. Deadlifts help develop total body strength, but also are vital for making a *thick* back. Whereas pull-ups can make wide lats, there is no substitute to make a thick back other than the deadlift.

However, there's a common problem with deadlifting: people suck at it. It leaves the scope of this book to correct deadlift technique, but the lifter's goal should be to perform quality deadlifts with a solid, straight trunk while engaging the hamstrings. Reverting into the pooping dog model means rounding the back and the hamstrings not doing their job; this is why RDLs are in this program. RDLs exist to develop the hamstrings, so aim to get good contraction instead of loading the bar to look cool in front of the bros at the gym. See the Appendix for lots of information on the RDL.

Figure 2.25. Pooping dogs round their back and don't have tight hamstrings.

RDLs can be trained with two goals: strengthening and muscular development. A set and rep scheme for strengthening would be the classic "three sets of five" whereas muscular development would benefit from higher reps, like three sets of ten. Again, the emphasis on quality movement cannot be stressed enough. When strengthening, the lifter shouldn't aim to load up as much weight as possible. Instead, they should start with 135 lbs for their work sets and progress slowly up to 225 lbs. People who deadlift in the mid 400s to low 500s will only use between 225 and 275 for three sets of five on the RDL. Anything heavier and the movement degrades into a bastardized deadlift.

Other posterior chain movements can be used, like good mornings or pull throughs, but my recommendation is to push quality RDLs to 225x5x3 before free styling with other exercises.

Deadlift

The set/rep scheme for deadlift, much like the squat, will depend on the lifter's goals. If they are focusing on their upper body and are reducing their squat and pulling work, then there is a lot of leeway in choosing a set/rep scheme. Work up to a medium set of three to five reps and do one to three back-off sets.

Actually pushing the deadlift up during a program that focuses on the upper body is possible, just not as successful. There are exercises added to this program that will detract from deadlift recovery, but you can still try a few methods.

Triple and Back-off Sets

This set/rep scheme is predicated on working up to a heavy triple, which may be a 3 rep max (3RM), and then perform one or two back-off sets. Doubles or singles can be used for the heavy sets instead of triples. It's extremely satisfying to some lifters to go in and deadlift heavy for 1 to 3 reps. Back-off sets should be about a 10% reduction for a triple. 70's Big coach and strongman/powerlifter Mike Battaglino regularly uses this set/rep scheme in his powerlifting and strongman training. Note that more advanced lifters may not be able to repeat this method on a weekly basis because it will be too stressful, especially when considering a) the other work in this program and b) the template isn't structured to optimize deadlifting.

Triple and Back-off Sets Example	
Work set triple	550x3
Back-off #1	500x3
Back-off #2	450x3

Figure 2.26. Each back-off set is about a 10% reduction in load. Note that the second back-off is optional.

Three Sets of Three

70's Big coach and raw powerlifter Chris Riley likes to program a "three sets of three" scheme for his lifters once they can't advance the "one set of five" scheme associated with linear progressions. Typically he uses about 85% of 1RM and has them perform that weight for three triples. In a normal program, this can be done weekly to accumulate volume, or it can be used in a rotation like in the Texas Method books. For our purposes, it's not meant to be a major stressor if the lifter's goal is upper body development; simply decrease the weight used and perform the sets across. If lifters use it with 85% like Chris does, then they should put it in a rotation.

Deadlift Weekly Alternate Example	
Week A	Heavy Triple
Week B	3x3

Figure 2.27. In Week A, the lifter would aim to progress the triple each week. Ideally the lifter would work up to a 3RM. Week B would consist of three triples at about 85%. It's more important to increase Week A than it is Week B; if Week B is too heavy, then Week A will not be possible.

Active Deload

This isn't so much a set/rep scheme as a strategy to reduce the deadlift stress, yet still get some decent work in. Active deloads are typically rotated weekly with stressful deadlift sessions. It could mean simply having a reduction in overall weight, or using a slightly different movement. Some methods include:

- Double over hand grip – Only deadlift what you can handle without alternating your grip.
- Fat bar deadlifts – Only deadlift what you can hold onto with a fat bar.
- Trap bar deadlifts – Use the trap bar and purposely keep the weight lower than deadlifting with a barbell.
- Snatch grip deadlift – Use a snatch grip to increase the range of motion of the pull and inherently use less weight.
- Deficit deadlifts – Stand on an elevated surface to change the start mechanics and increase the range of motion of the pull.
- Speed deadlifts – Use about 60% of 1RM and perform singles or doubles on the minute. This method is described in detail in The Texas Method: Part 1.
- Power cleans – Including these will break up the monotony and provide a bit of speed work, provided the lifter has already learned the movement.

The idea is having a reduction in stress with a movement that helps progress in the deadlift. Use an *Active Deload* on a two or three week cycle.

Examples of Using Active Deload in a Weekly Alternate	
Two Week Example	
Week A	Week A – Triple and Back-Off Sets
Week B	Week B – Active Deload
Three Week Example	
Week A	Week A – Triple and Back-Off Sets
Week B	Week B – Three sets of three reps
Week C	Week C – Active Deload

Figure 2.28. Active deload sessions can be placed in any rotation with heavy deadlift workouts. The lifter should be well rested after an active deload, so aim to do the heaviest session the week after the deload.

A Word on Set and Rep Schemes

Note that the set/rep schemes in this program are not restricted to *The 70's Big LP*. They can be dropped into any program, even linear progressions. There are many resources on beginner or novice programs, linear progressions, and intermediate and advanced programs, but the truth is that most lifters may lie somewhere in between these seemingly distinct phases. Or, at the very least, lifters will need to navigate from one phase to the next and there aren't any good resources out there to do it. Methods like the *Ascending Sets Progression, Increase the Jumps, The Triples and Fives Alternate,* and *Triple and Back-Off Sets* can be dropped into other programs. It just depends on what the lifter needs and wants in his program.

Putting It All Together

Now that you understand each exercise, its placement, and its possible set/rep schemes, let's look at a few templates putting it all together. Once you start exhausting a progression with the indicated set/rep scheme, implement the next progression as described in this chapter to continue progress. You'll find that you can progress for a very long time this way without ever having to use percentages of your hypothetical 1RM, yet you'll get bigger and stronger.

The following templates represent examples of *The 70's Big LP*. They are generally listed in a chronological order that follows the set/rep scheme progressions explained in this chapter for each exercise. A different set/rep scheme can be implemented with each exercise, and in some cases a different exercise can be subbed in. Use these templates as a base to tinker with for your purposes; they are not carved stone that must be blindly followed. Lastly, each cell contains the name of the exercise, the set/rep scheme associated with it, and examples of work sets.

Stage 1 Example		
Monday	**Wednesday**	**Friday**
Press 3x5 155x5x3	**Bench** 3x5 230x5x3	**Wtd Dips** 3x5+BW 50x5x3 BWx12
Squat 3x5 295x5x3	**Deadlift** 1x5 320x5	**Front Squat** 3x5 215x5x3
		RDL 3x10 135x10x3
Wtd Chin 3x5+BW 25x5x3 BWx10	**Barbell Row** 3x10 165x10x3	**Wtd Pull-ups** 3x5+BW 25x5x3 BWx10

Figure 2.29. This is an entry-level program. This template can serve to be a very effective linear progression. If the set/rep schemes are progressed per this chapter's prescription, this template can yield strength progress for a long time.

Stage 2 Example		
Monday	**Wednesday**	**Friday**
Press 3x5 ascending 160x5 170x5 180x5	**Bench** 3x5 ascending 240x5 250x5 260x5	**Wtd Dips** 3x3+BW 75x3x3 BWx10x2
Squat 3x5 ascending 305x5 315x5 325x5	**Deadlift** 1x3, -10% 1x3 350x3 315x3	**Front Squat** 3x5 ascending 240x5 250x5 260x5
		RDL 3x5 185x5x3
Wtd Chin 3x3+BW 50x3x3 BWx15	**Barbell Row** 3x5 200x5x3	**Wtd Pull-ups** 3x3+BW 50x3x3 BWx15
Biceps (1): Hammer Curl 25x10x3	**Triceps (1):** Overhead Ext 45x10x3	**Biceps(1):** Alt Dumbbell Curl 30x10x3

Figure 2.30. This example shows advancements in set/rep schemes for each exercise. The presses and squats move to ascending sets. The deadlift moves to a heavy triple with a back-off set. The weighted chin-ups, pull-ups, and dips move to fewer reps per set and increase the number of back-off reps. The barbell row moves to a strength set/rep scheme. Upper Body Isolation Exercises make an appearance by following the rule of adding one exercise for each. Overall, this is an example of moving to the next step with all of the exercises, but your program should be tailored to you. For example, your presses will shift to ascending sets when they need to. Your goals may keep the squatting loads down as you push your deadlift. Guide yourself with your goals and the set/rep schemes in the chapter.

	Stage 3		
	Monday	**Wednesday**	**Friday**
A	**Press** 3x5 ascending 185x5 190x5 195x5	**Bench** 3x5 ascending 270x5 275x5 280x5	**Wtd Dips** 3x8 90x8x3 BWx15x2
	Squat 3x3 ascending 370x3 380x3 390x3	**Deadlift** 1x3, -10% 1x3 380x3 340x3	**Front Squat** 3x3 ascending 270x3 280x3 290x3
			RDL 3x5 215x5x3
	Wtd Chin 70x3 50 x reps 25 x reps BW x reps	**Barbell Rows** 3x5, -10% x reps 240x5x3 210xReps	**Wtd Pull-ups** 80x3 50 x reps 25 x reps BW x reps
	Biceps (2): Super Set x 3: BB Curl 135x10 Hammer Curl 40x8	**Triceps (2):** Super Set x 3: Pressdown 90x10 Kickbacks 30x10	**Biceps (2):** Super Set x 3: BB Curl 135x10 Alt DB Curl 45x8
	Monday	**Wednesday**	**Friday**
B	**Press** 3x3 ascending 205x3 210x3 215x3	**Bench** 3x3 ascending 295x3 300x3 305x3	**Wtd Dips** 3x6 115x6x3 BWx15x2
	Squat 3x3 ascending 375x3 385x3 395x3	**Deadlift** 3x3 @ 85% of 1RM 355x3x3	**Front Squat** 3x3 ascending 275x3 285x3 295x3
			RDL 3x5 220x5x3
	Wtd Chin 75x3 50 x reps 25 x reps BW x reps	**Barbell Row** 3x5, -10% x reps 245x5x3 215 x reps	**Wtd Pull-up** 85x3 50 x reps 25 x reps BW x reps
	Biceps (2): BB Curl 140x10x3 Hammer Curl 45x5 rest-pauses	**Triceps (2):** Overhead Ext 90x10x3 Skull Crusher 75x5 rest-pauses	**Biceps (2):** BB Curl 140x10x3 Alt DB Curl 50x5 rest-pauses

Figure 2.31. This is still the same template, but with more advanced set/rep schemes on every exercise. The presses are in a Triples and Fives Alternate. The squats are in a 3x3 ascending progression. The deadlift is in a weekly alternate of triples with a back-off and 3x3. The weighted dips are in a 10-8-6 weekly alternate. Week A's arm training supersets the exercises. Week B's arm training does the exercises separately, but the second exercise uses rest-pauses. Each exercise's set/rep scheme should reflect the progression of the trainee. Simply follow the instructions in this chapter.

Chapter 3 – Helpful Info

This chapter contains information to help the lifter focus his efforts while using this program. Things like defining goals, improving press technique, conditioning work, mobility, nutrition, sleep, female training, and travelling are discussed to lead the lifter towards success.

Juggling Goals

This programming template can be good for a few things. F rst, it's a different kind of linear progression that will not only yield total body strength, but develop a lagging upper body. It's possible some beginners will choose this program to eliminate the "big legs, small arms" problem.

Consistency is very important for developing strength and muscularity. If you are someone who is not consistent with training, eating, or recovery, then address the issue now. Remember, if you're willing to spend 10+ hours in the gym, then you might as well make your time worth it. Squatting twice a week, benching and pressing each once a week, doing pull-ups and chin-ups each once a week, deadlifting and rowing once a week, and adding some isolation work to the arms consistently for the next 50 weeks is more important than pushing your 1RM or top sets in the next two months. By training consistently, you will get stronger by developing a balanced foundation of muscle. Consistency and slow progression are more important for guys who wish they were bigger. Let's discuss the differences in goals and how to use this program to achieve them:

"I want bigger arms"

This is the easiest goal to program for because this trainee understands he needs to get stronger, but won't get upset if his lifts don't increase every single week (though they should for a while). The fact that he is performing the upper body pulling exercises on top of a systemic, compound strength program means he'll start to develop his arms. It's okay if the squat and deadlift are not pushed incredibly hard, but keep them in the program, even if you don't care about them, to apply the systemic stress.

"I want bigger/better (insert body part here)"

Why stop at arm training? If you want a bigger back or better calves, glutes, or shoulders, you can easily sub isolation work for those related muscles in the same spot the arm training is. Male or female, who cares, this is your program and your goals. The criteria are stick to two exercises and don't interfere with recovery of the big lifts.

"I want to increase my bench and press"

This trainee will need to carefully tweak his rep ranges on the bench and press (as discussed in Chapter 2 – The Program) to hit new PRs. Consistently hitting the auxiliary work (like rows and chin-ups/pull-ups) should provide a boost on the presses, but will require a couple of months to show. Initially, focus on the extra upper body pulling work as it will pay off in the long run.

"I want to get stronger in everything"

If the trainee is brand new to lifting, they will easily make progress on everything. The farther along their progression they are, the closer they will have to tweak the set and rep ranges to accommodate progress. It's possible to strengthen all of these lifts; I was an intermediate lifter using this template and PR'd on pull-ups (21 body weight reps, 90 pounds weighted for 300 total pounds for a single), bench (350 lbs), press (240 lbs), and deadlift (500 lbs). Consistently using this program allowed me to push my lifts up and balance out my numbers with the Olympic lifts when I modified the program (which led to a 300 lbs push press, 365 lbs clean and jerk, and 285 lbs snatch at a 210 body weight).

Most lifters need to fix imbalances in musculature to get stronger overall. This is why this program includes so many Upper Body Compound Exercises; they are vital to balancing out strength and musculature. Since the hamstrings are a common deficiency in the lower body, RDLs were added to address it. The second most common deficiency concerns the glutes, so lifters can add specific work to the program on Friday if necessary.

Assistance Exercise Progression

Lifters on the internet are often over-concerned with assistance work. The truth is that assistance exercise should be done to develop lagging musculature or strength in order to aid the big movements. It's the large movements like squat, bench, press, and deadlift that make someone stronger and bigger. The truth is that the progression of assistance exercises doesn't really matter. But this program is all about humoring you, so let's talk about it.

Think about why you are executing a given assistance exercise. Is it supposed to directly build strength? Or is it more of a muscular development exercise? The Pendlay barbell row is a strength builder. The weighted dip is a strength builder. They both will contribute to size, but they handle a large amount of weight relative to other assistance exercises that work the same musculature. Therefore they are better for increasing strength. T-bar rows and skull crushers shape and develop musculature. This adds some stress to help the muscles grow, and their growth means they are mechanically more efficient to apply force, which is strength. You need to be strong to grow, but smaller exercises can increase growth to help strength. If you think about your exercises this way, then they achieve a hierarchy or importance.

The strength building assistance exercises should be progressed similarly to the big lifts. Use the set/rep schemes indicated in Chapter 2 – The Program, and try to progress slowly yet consistently each session. If the weight gets so heavy the mechanics get crappy, then reset.

The muscle development exercises don't need as much attention. They are present to give the muscles work to grow, but shouldn't interfere with the recovery of the big movements or strength building assistance work. This is why they are done last in the session. The primary difference is on correct mechanics to maintain muscle tension – the concept discussed in "Feeling the Muscle" To work muscle to grow, keep tension on it throughout the exercise. This is why using lots of English on dumbbell alternated curls is a waste of time; it unloads tension from the muscle. Therefore, muscle development exercises should focus on good form instead of more weight. If this means using the same weight for

several weeks, then so be it. The inclusion of the exercise is what matters, not how much weight or reps you complete.

External Rotation during the Presses

When bench pressing, pressing, or doing dips, trainees need to actively cue "external rotation" – a movement that rotates the upper arm bone (the humerus) away from the center of the body. Flaring the elbows out is internal rotation, the opposite movement. Internal rotation changes the angle of the humerus in a way that reduces the total musculature contributing to the movement.

On the bench and dip, internal rotation reduces the pectoral involvement and directs stress to the point of the shoulder, or the area around the acromioclavicular (AC) joint. This is an area where several muscles attach to the bone with their respective tendons. They aren't supposed to receive significant forces, and flaring the elbows during any pressing movement improperly loads them. Doing this chronically will break the soft tissue down in the area and cause pain, often making the lifter think he can't recover.

Flaring the elbows during the press reduces correct triceps involvement and also improperly loads the area around the AC. Unloading the triceps means they aren't worked through their full range of motion preventing them from getting stronger and bigger; this leads to a lifter with unimpressive arms. Understand that your shoulder health, upper body strength, and jackedness are dependent on *not* flaring the elbows. Some trainees will need to completely reset all of their pressing movements and work on proper technique.

There are several articles in the Appendix that can help with cues, but here are some general concepts with the pressing movements in this program.

More Tension Means More Muscle

Most trainees have heard the cue "knees out" for squatting. The result of this cue is to make the hips externally rotate, which contracts the external rotators and lateral part of the hip and therefore lengthens the internal rotators and medial part of the hip (to include the adductors of the groin). To simplify the biomechanics, this means that all the muscles on all sides of the hip are active and providing tension. The more tension, the more control there is throughout the range of motion of the squat.

The same principle applies here to the pressing movements. The external rotators of the shoulder will activate if the elbows are cued to a) stay at 45 degrees on the bench and press and b) stay close to the ribs on the dip. This lengthens the internal rotators of the shoulder and therefore provides more tension, and therefore stability at the shoulder. Stability is important since the shoulder joint can move around so easily. In the last chapter, we briefly talked about how the scapula and humerus are held in place by muscle and soft tissue. The scapula itself can move around – up, down, in, and out. Not having control of the scapula during a pressing movement means not all of the force the muscles are applying is

actually getting to the bar. External rotation is vital to stabilize the shoulder on pressing movements and if the shoulder is stable, then force can be efficiently transferred.

This is why the shoulders should be pinched with the chest lifted when setting up for a bench; it pins the scapula in place on the bench to prevent them from moving around. If the shoulders are pinned, then the humerus is moving on a solid anchor point and therefore can apply force to the bar.

Corkscrewing for External Rotation

Instead of thinking about moving the knees or elbows to result in external rotation, think about the movement starting from the hip or shoulder joint. If you want the knees out, think about the hip joint cork screwing out and pulling the knee into its proper "knees out" position. To keep the elbows in and not flared, think about the shoulder cork screwing the musculature that results in pulling the elbows in with vertical forearms. This will actively contract the external rotators instead of lackadaisically doing so by cuing the limb instead of the joint.

Mobility

Poor shoulder mobility can result in subpar mechanics, which can lead to an acute or chronic injury. This section is by no means an attempt at treating injuries or providing a comprehensive mobility guideline. Instead, it aims to point out the importance of corrective mobility work.

Shoulder mobility may limit the end range of motion for shoulder flexion. This means the lock out of a press overhead is not directly over the shoulders, but out front. The trainee will compensate by extending the spine to roll the shoulders back in order to put the bar over the shoulder joint. This can cause problems in the shoulder or the spine. If you have this issue – or know you have shoulder problems or tightness – then conduct dedicated shoulder mobility on a daily basis, including prior to training.

Nutrition

Most people will use *The 70's Big LP* to get a more muscular upper body. However, muscle can be grown and obscured by body fat, so a secondary goal to "getting jacked" is lowering body fat. The first concern in trying to lower body fat is **improving food quality** intake by cutting out crap like soda, grain, and processed foods. Next, get a **consistent intake of macronutrients** (or protein, carbs, and fat). Eat at least 1g of protein per pound of body weight, drink primarily water, and only eat quality carbs and fats. For more, check out *Paleo for Lifters*, a nutrition book that uses the Paleo Diet as a foundation, but with an emphasis on fueling lifters and athletes. Simply put: meat, potatoes, good fats, veggies, and fruit.

Sleep and Recovery

One of the requirements of this program is to sleep at least eight hours a night. This will pay dividends in all aspects of your life, such as sexual libido, ability to grow muscle and shed body fat, feel and think better at work or school, not getting sick, and just doing everything better. If you must cut time out of the gym in order to sleep more, do it.

Additionally, psychological and emotional stress can inhibit your progress in the same way physical stress can. Actively work to learn how to deal with confrontation and stress by reading relevant books. Take five to ten minutes out of your day to conduct progressive relaxation. Simply search the phrase on the internet for audio files, go into a quiet room, and hit play. It will sound and feel cheesy, but if you commit to doing it every day for two weeks, you will not only thank me, you'll feel better. Relaxation, mindfulness, and emotional control are skills, so commit to practicing them. It will help you recover and train harder in the gym.

Conditioning

Old school or conventional trainees will wonder if they need to be doing "cardio." If you are going to engage in any form of endurance training, conduct high intensity conditioning. Doing work at intensity applies a significant stress the body is not accustomed to. Experiencing a work output much greater than a 2 to 5 mile run creates a different adaptation than merely running slow, such as increased muscle size, decreased body fat, and having a better work capacity.

High intensity conditioning can be dropped in on any training day. The only programmatic error would be doing conditioning on off days. Applying a systemic stress to the body on an off day would be counter-productive since we are relying on the recovery process to result in the desired adaptation. Place the conditioning sessions after the lifting workout or on Saturday morning.

Be aware that conditioning increases the stress in an already busy program. A common fault for trainees is trying to do too much in a program. Ron Swanson says, "Don't half ass two things, whole ass one thing." Be mindful of this concept when choosing conditioning workouts. Keep the sessions short (less than ten minutes) and don't destroy a certain body part. There's no need to perform more than 60 to 100 reps of a given exercise or to go above 60% of 1RM. Less work done fast is key with metabolic adaptation. For more on conditioning, see *FIT* – my chapter on programming conditioning is longer than this entire book.

Females

There are over 50 articles on 70sBig.com that pertain to training females, yet the consensus is that lifting not only does not make them bulky, but it results in lower body fat and a defined body. Ignoring the hang ups stereotypical women have with training, females are hormonally different and therefore may require modifications to their set/rep schemes.

A woman using *The 70's Big LP* should aim to use the standard set/rep schemes and observe progress. If she doesn't see the appropriate progress, she can start to tweak variables relevant to her goal. Does she not care about arm size, but likes this program, and wants to develop her hamstrings? Then cut out the upper body isolation movements, keep the upper body compound movements, and use a higher rep scheme on RDLs. Walking barbell lunges are another fantastic exercise that develops the legs and hips; they are a great addition for the woman who wants a voluptuous hiney instead of a flat, trucker butt.

On the basic barbell lifts like squat, deadlift, press and bench, women may require higher volume to yield progress. Before adjusting the set/rep scheme, ensure that exercises are present to improve lagging symmetry. For example, rows and pull-ups will still help a woman increase her upper body strength just like a man. If she wasn't doing them on a consistent basis, then run this program the way it is.

Females still need to get strong, so they should keep the regular set/rep scheme if they are progressing. Try using drop sets as a way to increase volume. If no drop sets have been performed after the work sets, start incorporating one with lighter weight for maximum reps *with good mechanics*. Drop 10 to 20% off the work set weight and only complete quality reps. Don't accept anything but properly executed reps so that a) she refines the skill of the movement and b) the musculature is worked effectively. Sometimes women default into poorly loaded positions when the weight gets heavy, so this emphasis on precision with lighter weight is important long-term.

The Travelling Trainee

Lifters who travel often need to make time in their schedule to hit the gym. Even hotel gyms are better than nothing; work with what is available. If there is access to a barbell, don't intend on hitting your normal numbers. Sitting in cars and airplanes has an uncanny ability to destroy the body, and trying to train hard often results in injury. Keep the weight light if necessary and increase the reps per set to make up for lighter weight.

If the gym only has dumbbells, then follow the general outline of this program: perform a press, then a big movement, then an upper body rowing movement, and finish with isolation work. Using dumbbells for squats, lunges, deadlifts, and RDLs is easy, so don't neglect these movements.

If there are no free weights, and there's a pull-up bar, then it's time to do an impressive amount of pull-ups. Feel free to vary the grip or super set with lower body exercises (like squats, lunges, or jump squats) or push-ups.

Don't let travelling get in the way of a good workout; work with what you have, but get the work in. And don't use it as an excuse to eat crappy; plan ahead and make good food choices. Or at least choose the least crappy option available. And don't forget to sleep eight hours.

The Busy Lifter

Some guys have erratic schedules, whether because of work, play, or recreational sports, they have to adjust their training week. There are a few options.

First, the entire training week can be shifted left or right in the week. This can be a temporary option as they can shift back to normal the following week. Note that these shifts can change the duration of rest between workouts. For example, if the Friday workout is shifted to Saturday, and the schedule resumes on Monday, there is only one day of rest. That may not be enough time to recover from the weighted dips or squatting. The press or squat on Monday could potentially suffer. Being aware of this is important for making decisions on what weights to use on Monday.

Second, a session could be performed, but with intentionally lighter weights. The act of doing the exercises is more important than not going to the gym at all. A lot of lifters simply need consistency, so complete the session, even if it is lighter weight.

Third, a session can be deleted. This is a bit drastic, but may be necessary for guys who are beat up at work, practice, or games. We can't expect a judo player competing in a weekend tourney to hit the gym with the same fervor; it usually will over work or hurt him. Folks in this position – participating or competing in something that is taxing – need to accept they can't train for everything at once. Whether it means condensing *The 70's Big LP* down to two sessions a week or accepting that Friday sessions will be a light day, they need to have a plan to prevent themselves from getting beat down.

Flexible Changes

When life gets in the way of training, whether it is illness or high stress, it is necessary to modify training. Sometimes lifters will continue to push as hard as their program says they should, and they end up causing too much stress on a system that is already suppressed. Whatever the reason, if you're feeling beat down physically, mentally, or psychologically, chances are that you may need to alter your training to reduce stress. And this is perfectly okay. It's better to make a reduction compared to making your illness worse or getting hurt. Here are some ideas in an order of precedence from low stress to high stress.

First, you can simply reduce the amount of weight lifted. This will lower the intensity and overall tonnage but still give some work.

Second, you can cut out some exercises, usually assistance exercises. Combine this with reducing the weight on the primary presses, squats, and deadlifts and you significantly reduce the stress of the session but can still get some reps in.

Third, you can focus on low stress exercise, namely the assistance exercises. Do some pull-ups, RDLs, and curls, then get out of the gym.

Fourth, don’t lift at all. If you are legitimately sick or have major life stressors going on, you’re better off getting a good night of sleep. Mobility work should be all you do, if anything.

When you return to training after illness or severe life situations, ease back into things during the first week. Have two light sessions and a medium session in week one, then start week two with a medium session before returning to your normal intensity. This may sound over cautious, but it’s better to take precautions than get sick or hurt.

Appendix

This is a collection of some articles from 70sBig.com that are helpful to read in conjunction with this book and training program.

- Improving Diet
- Shoulder Health – Part 1
- Shoulder Health – Part 2
- The Lats While Benching
- Developing A Pull-up
- Programming Pull-ups
- Low Bar vs High Bar Squatting – Part 1
- Low Bar vs High Bar Squatting – Part 2
- 3 Press Fixes
- Chalk Talk #18 – General and Specific Warm-ups
- The RDL
- Chalk Talk #15 – The RDL

For more helpful articles and videos, go to 70sBig.com and the 70's Big YouTube Channel.

About The Author

Justin Lascek holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Kinesiology with an emphasis on Exercise Science. He holds a CrossFit Level II Certification and was on staff for the CrossFit Barbell Training Seminars and Starting Strength Seminars with Mark Rippetoe. He has coached and trained a variety of populations including: Special Operations soldiers from every branch of the military (including international teams), football, track, baseball, basketball, softball, and swimming athletes, paraplegics and cancer survivors, obese and skinny folks, injured trainees requiring rehabilitation, CrossFitters, Olympic weightlifters, and raw powerlifters.

Justin is the primary writer and owner of 70sBig.com, a strength and conditioning website established in 2009. He regularly coaches, consults, and creates programs for trainees, athletes, and soldiers. His approach to programming for fitness or performance revolves around strength training with barbells and using efficient high intensity conditioning.

Justin played a year of collegiate football and competed at the USA Weightlifting Senior National Championships in 2010. He regularly trains and often performs experiments to gain personal experience for writing topics.

Justin enjoys spending time with his wife, playing with their two dogs, reading, studying the human body, writing, adventuring, and training.

Contact Information

Due to the high volume of e-mails Justin receives, he asks that you contact him in the comments of 70sBig.com, on the 70's Big Facebook Fan Page, the 70's Big Twitter, or the 70's Big Instagram. The 70's Big Consultation Team can be reached at 70sBigConsult@gmail.com for programming consultations.

Other Books

Paleo for Lifters

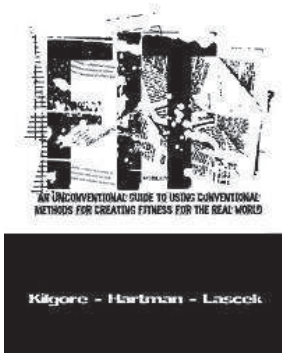
This is a marriage between the Paleolithic Diet and old school strength and conditioning eating. Paleo-quality food reduces inflammation and helps us recover from training. This book will teach you how to eat the quality food in the proper quantities to increase muscle and decrease bodyfat. Learn more here.

The Texas Method: Part 1

This book teaches the intermediate strength program called The Texas Method, how to transition into, how to adjust it to garner progress, and how to use it for various sub-goals like powerlifting. It is for novice and intermediate lifters. Learn more here.

The Texas Method: Advanced

Part 1 introduces the general outline of intermediate programming, but TM: Advanced teaches you how to control dosages of volume, how to structure the program for raw powerlifting, and a variety of important programmatic tweaks that will push you past sticking points. It is for intermediate and advanced lifters. Learn more here.


FIT
AN UNCONVENTIONAL GUIDE TO USING CONVENTIONAL METHODS FOR CREATING FITNESS FOR THE REAL WORLD
Kilgore - Hartman - Lascek

FIT

Being "fit" means being strong and mobile with adequate endurance. This book is a no-nonsense general fitness book that can help trainees and athletes of any advancement. Chapters on the history, physiology, and effectiveness of proper strength and endurance training are followed up by chapters on how to program everything together based on the trainee's current state of adaptation. Barbell training and high intensity endurance training is hard, but it will make you fit. For more information and to purchase, please see FIT on Amazon.com.

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Many thanks to you, the reader, for purchasing this book. I hope that you learn from it and get jacked.